Promoting Religious Freedom During the Campaign Against Terrorism: The Hon. Susan Rice Oral Testimony

November 27, 2001 DR. RICE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Commissioners, it's a pleasure to be here.I've been asked to speak in broad terms about Africa's role in the war on terrorism. I will come in some detail toward the end of my testimony to the specific subject of Sudan.I wanted to begin by sharing an observation, that since September 11th, I'm almost unable to count the number of people who said to me what a shame it is that Africa will now get fewer resources and absolutely zero attention in Washington. And while I certainly acknowledge the conventional wisdom behind this sentiment, I can't think of an outcome that would be more shortsighted and indeed more dangerous, if we're not just to fight but ultimately to win the global war on terrorism. We should not and we cannot see Africa as separate from our comprehensive and long-term war against terror. You might ask what has Africa got to do with al Qaeda or terrorist finance networks or even weapons of mass destruction? I'm afraid the reality is that Africa is the world's soft underbelly for terrorism. As became painfully obvious, even to casual observers after the bombings of our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, terrorism directed against the United States is alive and well in Africa. Al Qaeda and other terrorist cells are active throughout East, West and Southern Africa, not to mention North Africa. These organizations hide throughout Africa. They plan, finance, train for and execute terrorist operations in many parts of Africa, not just Sudan and Somalia. They seek uranium, chemical weapons, components, and the knowledge of renegade nuclear, chemical and biological weapons experts from Libya to South Africa.Terrorist organizations take advantage of Africa's porous borders, weak law enforcement and security services and recent judicial institutions to run money and weapons around the globe. They take advantage of poor disillusioned and often religious or ethnic grievances within populations to recruit for their war against the rest of the world. Terrorist networks are exploiting Africa clearly and rapidly, and in the process they directly threaten our national security.So what are we doing about this? I would argue not nearly enough. Two critical pieces are missing from our comprehensive global counter-terrorism strategy. One is shorter term, the other is longer term.First and most immediately, we must help those countries in Africa and elsewhere that have the will to cooperate with us in the war on terror but lack the means. There are plenty of countries that cannot act to defend their own citizens from terror, much less America's citizens. Recall that Kenya and Tanzania lost over 200 of their own dead, and suffered more than 5,000 casualties. I was pleased to hear President Bush say in his speech to the UN General Assembly that we would help such countries, but we do not have in place any strategy to do so, and we certainly haven't set aside the resources to implement such a strategy. I believe it's imperative that we invest tens of millions of dollars annually in helping build counter-crime and counter-terrorism capacity in a large number of African countries. We must help them take the necessary steps to control their borders, improve intelligence collection, strengthen law enforcement and security services, and build effective transparent judicial systems. We need to invest not only in big countries like Nigeria, South Africa and Ethiopia, but over time throughout the continent because the threat is continental in scope.Second, over the longer term we have to drain the swamps where the terrorists breed. Many of these are in the Middle East and South Asia and Central Asia, but many are also in Africa today, and potentially in the Caribbean and Latin America tomorrow. Islam is a large and fast-growing religion in Africa. That in itself is not a concern, but the fact that some of Islam's most radical and anti-American adherents are increasingly active from South Africa to Sudan, from Nigeria to Algeria, should be of great concern to us. Much of Africa is a veritable incubator for the foot soldiers of terrorism. Its overwhelmingly young, disaffected, unhealthy and under-educated populations, often have no stake in government, no faith in the future, and harbor an easily-exploitable discontent with the status quo. Perhaps that's part of the reason why we see an increase in recent years in the number of African nationals engaged in acts of international terrorism. These are the swamps I referred to that we must drain, and we must do so for the cold, hard reason that to otherwise we place our national security at further and more permanent risk.To drain these swamps, we must reduce the burgeoning hostility that I've described and address its sources. We must view it as our fight, not just the developing world's, to close the gaps between rich and poor. It must be our fight, not just Africa's, to educate the under-educated, prevent and treat infectious disease, especially HIV-AIDS, to increase trade, investment and growth, to fight corruption, as well as to promote greater respect for human rights and strengthen democratic institutions. Without progress on these fronts through the developing world, we should expect bin Laden and future such enemies to free underground constituency for the radical form of Islam, whose chief tenet is hatred of America and the rest of the civilized world.Now, obviously, fighting these battles will not be swift or cheap. America, leading our partners in the developed world, both in the public and private sectors, will have to invest on a scale previously inconceivable if we are to defend ourselves against this threat. We will have to open our markets completely to good and services from the developing world. We'll have to provide much more trade and investment financing, bridge the digital divide, increase assistance for education, especially for girls, build necessary health infrastructure and treat the infected, invest greater resources in debt relief and in finding a vaccine for HIV-AIDS. We will also have to invest in fostering democratic institutions and civil society, so that we foster political cultures in which individual human beings are valued and in which religious freedom and other human rights are respected.In short, we will have to pay the price, billions and billions of dollars, to help lift the people's of Africa and the rest of the under developed world out of poverty, out of political and social injustice, and thus, out of despair. If we don't, we'll reap the harvest of a disaffected generation's hostility and growing anti-Americanism. It goes without saying the United States can't do this alone, nor could all the developed countries in the world together. African people's and African governments will have to provide the leadership, the transparency, the will and the commitment to forge a better future. Without this, all well-intentioned efforts will fail. But with mutual commitment and serious sustained investment, we can achieve mutual security and possibly even mutual prosperity.I want to say a bit about the budget. It's

obviously unfortunate that we are by necessity in budget-busting times, but it's not enough to ramp up spending as we are and we must only for intelligence and defense. We must also dramatically increase resources in the foreign operations accounts to help would-be partners in Africa and elsewhere to fight with us side by side in the war on terrorism. The foreign operations budget is all but final, and regrettably, it's business as usual, a virtual straight-line appropriation. At the end of the day Pakistan will get supplemental resources and fare better than last year, obviously, but much of the rest of the world will not. And Africa, after several years of progressively increasing resources under the previous administration, will predictably and short-sightedly get less than last year. Now is the time to reverse that trend. We cannot realistically hope to win a truly comprehensive global war on terrorism without substantial additional foreign operations resources.I'd like to turn now to the subject of Sudan.CHAIRMAN YOUNG: Dr. Rice, we have just one minute left.DR. RICE: Sudan has been an active and aggressive state sponsor of terrorism. It's been for many years the only country in sub-Saharan Africa that poses a direct threat to U.S. national security. But suddenly in the light of September 11th, according to administration officials, Sudan has begun meaningful cooperation with the United States on terrorism. Good. Fear in this case of American military strikes can be a great motivator. Whether it can be a converter, time only will tell. I believe if Sudan indeed provides meaningful, comprehensive and sustained cooperation in the war on terrorism, we ought to acknowledge it. But if Sudan does not, it should be reminded of President Bush's promise to go after unreconstructed state sponsors of terrorism the way we've gone after the Taliban. I'd like to say moreover, and very importantly, we need to separate the issues of potential Sudanese cooperation on terrorism from our longstanding objections to Sudan's human rights abuses, its brutal prosecution of the civil war, its use of humanitarian assistance as a weapon of war in its efforts to destabilize its neighbors. The administration must continue to make plain to Sudan that cooperation on terrorism will not afford it a get-out-of-jail-free card on any other issue. We must hold the government of Sudan's feet to the fire, stressing that there can be no improvement in our overall bilateral relationship, including no lifting of U.S. sanctions until Sudan halts its egregious human rights abuses and compromises sufficiently to achieve a just peace on the basis of respect for the rights of each of its citizens, whether black or Arab, whether Christian of Muslim.If Sudan is genuinely interested in an improved relationship with the United States as opposed to simply avoiding more military strikes, then the U.S. may now face an unprecedented opportunity to pressure the government of Sudan more effectively to change fundamentally its behavior. Personally, I doubt Sudan is so motivated at present. I'd be delighted to be wrong, but I'd be surprised if I am. In any event, the U.S. ought to continue to press Sudan on these issues now as hard as ever, and importantly we should give no comfort to Sudan that absent such fundamental changes in its policies and practices that the U.S. posture will in any way shift. Unfortunately, this administration's continued efforts to stop congressional action on the Sudan Peace Act, provide Khartoum with just such comfort. In this context, Khartoum is certain to pocket the appeasement without making any meaningful or sustained changes on human rights, the peace process or humanitarian access.So let me say in closing that we ought to maintain, and indeed increase pressure on Sudan to change fundamentally its behavior. We ought not to lift our bilateral sanctions. We ought to pass the Sudan Peace Act in its toughest form. And we ought not to alter any fundamentals of our bilateral relationship unless and until Sudan first demonstrates a conversion in deeds, not just words.Thank you very much.